

Released 2006
Achievement Test

English
Language Arts
Part B: Readings
and Questions

GRADE

9

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This document contains released items from the 2006 Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test.

Released test items, which contained approximately 25% of the total number of test items from previously secured achievement tests, were mailed to school administrators each fall from 2004 to 2006 and have been made available to teachers in only print form because of copyright limitations. **Every second year**, as of the fall of 2007, **a complete test** for all achievement test subjects and grades (except grades 6 and 9 Social Studies; grades 3, 6, and 9 Français/French Language Arts; and Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability courses) will be **mailed** to school administrators in conjunction with the Assessment Highlights report for that year. In this way, teachers will receive complete forms of achievement tests. The parts of those tests that are released in print form for which electronic copyright permission is received will subsequently be posted on the Alberta Education website. A test blueprint and an answer key that includes the difficulty, reporting category, language function, and item description for each test item will also be included. These materials, along with the Program of Studies and Subject Bulletin, provide information that can be used to inform instructional practice.

Assessment highlights provide information about the overall test, the test blueprints, and student performance on the 2008 Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test. Also provided is commentary on student performance at the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence* on selected items from the 2008 achievement test. This information is intended for teachers and is best used in conjunction with the multi-year and detailed school reports that are available to schools via the extranet. **Assessment Highlights reports** for all achievement test subjects and grades (except Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability courses) will be **posted on the Alberta Education website every year** in the fall.

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Part B: Reading—2006 Achievement Test Readings and Questions

The readings and questions presented in this document are from the previously secured 2006 *Part B: Reading* Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test and are representative of the readings and questions that form these tests. These readings and questions are released by Alberta Education.

Grade 9 Achievement Test

2006

English Language Arts

Part B: Reading

Readings and Questions

I. Read the article below and answer questions 1 to 5.

ANNIE EDSON TAYLOR

On October 24, 1901, the first person to challenge Niagara Falls in a barrel successfully completed a trip over the great cataract.

Annie Edson Taylor, a 46-year-old widowed schoolteacher living in Bay City, Michigan, conceived the idea of passing over the Falls in a barrel. Reading of the
5 crowds attracted by the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, she figured that she could attract a great deal of attention and financial success by this stunt, enabling her to augment her finances and pay off debts that she had incurred.

Born October 24, 1855, in Auburn, N.Y., she married at 17, and by the time she was 20 had borne a son. She lost her son a few days after the birth, and later
10 lost her husband.

Realizing that her education was incomplete, she returned to school, finished her education, and proceeded to secure a variety of teaching positions in such varied locations as Texas, New Mexico, Tennessee, Washington, D.C., and even
Cuba before moving to Michigan.

After deciding to proceed with the stunt, Annie contracted the Bocenchia Company of West Bay City to build a suitable barrel. This barrel was made of white Kentucky oak, 56 cm in diameter at its head, 87 cm at the middle, and 38 cm at the foot, with an overall length of close to 1.5 m. It weighed 73 kg and had a
15 50- to 100-kg anvil in its bottom.

Originally, the trip was scheduled for Sunday, October 20, and several thousand people gathered at the Falls to witness the event. Taylor, however, failed to show, and her performance was rescheduled for the following Wednesday. Again she failed to appear. But the next day, on her 46th birthday, she left Grass Island above the Falls at about 3:30 P.M. in a small boat, towing her
20 barrel behind her.

About 182 m out into the river, she changed into her abbreviated costume—she even had the male attendants look the other way while she changed, though her costume was well below her knees in length.

Climbing into the barrel from its top, she stood on the anvil and was packed
30 tightly in on all sides with pillows and a small mattress. The lid of the barrel was then screwed on with four 5-cm screws. Her assistants tapped twice on the barrel, to which she responded that all was in readiness.

They cut the rope, gave the barrel a shove, and watched it head downstream before rowing back to the Canadian shore. The time was 4:05 P.M., and it took
35 17 minutes for the barrel to reach the lip of Horseshoe Falls, tilt slightly forward, and disappear into the spray.

The trip thus far was remarkably smooth, though the barrel, riding vertically most of the way because of the ballast,¹ did occasionally go end-over-end upon

¹ballast—a heavy material placed in an object for stability

40 hitting submerged rocks. Almost immediately after passing over the 50-m
cataract, Mrs. Taylor's barrel bobbed to the surface in the waters below and was
brought close to the Canadian shore by the eddies and river current. But now it
became stranded on a rocky reef, and it was 4:40 before a makeshift bridge of
planks and poles could be constructed to reach it. Yet more time was needed to
free her, as it was necessary to saw off the top of the barrel.

45 Mrs. Taylor waved feebly to the crowd and is reported to have said to her
rescuers, "Nobody ought ever to do that again." But she was alive and had
suffered only slight cuts and bruises from her perilous 75-minute trip.

In a small booklet she published herself, recounting the plunge over the Falls,
she described her feelings of absolute terror as the barrel dropped over the
50 precipice. She suffered several anxious moments when her barrel was carried
behind the sheet of falling water and was severely buffeted² about, but the barrel
was soon propelled into the river, where she was rescued. Taylor was quite
incoherent for several days after her stunt.

She claimed that her barrel had been stolen and, in effect, it had been. Some
55 records of the event state that the barrel was broken up and carried off by eager
souvenir hunters.

Her attempt to cash in on the stunt was far from successful. She toured the
U.S. and Canada with her manager, appearing on vaudeville stages and in concert
halls, but because of her personality, her appearance, and her rather harsh voice,
60 her tour was a failure. A second tour, this time with a replica barrel as a stage
prop, was equally disastrous, and Annie Edson Taylor was reduced almost to
poverty.

Within a year, she was managing a meagre living by posing for pictures beside
her barrel and selling penny postcards of herself in front of souvenir shops on both
65 sides of the border. This means of livelihood lasted almost 20 years until she died
practically penniless in the Niagara County Infirmary, Lockport, N.Y., in 1921.

She was buried in the stunters' section of Oakwood Cemetery. Over her grave
is a stone reading: "Annie Edson Taylor—first to go over Niagara Falls in a
barrel—October 24, 1901."

Francis J. Petrie

²buffeted—hit, beaten, or battered repeatedly

I. Read the article “Annie Edson Taylor” and answer questions 1 to 5.

1. According to the article, Annie Taylor decided to go over the Falls in a barrel because she wanted to
 - A. earn some money
 - B. impress other stunts
 - C. upstage previous stunts
 - D. prove that it could be done

2. The word “incoherent” (line 53) suggests that after her stunt, Annie was **most likely**
 - A. unable to think clearly
 - B. overcome with fatigue
 - C. very upset
 - D. badly hurt

3. Annie Taylor did not achieve her main goal in going over the Falls because
 - A. she did not like to do road shows
 - B. she died before she became famous
 - C. her shows did not attract many people
 - D. her barrel was stolen by souvenir hunters

4. The last two paragraphs **mainly** suggest that Annie
 - A. lived an impoverished life
 - B. became famous for her stunt
 - C. regretted going over the falls
 - D. never recovered from the stunt

5. The **main** purpose of this article is to
 - A. persuade readers not to try dangerous stunts
 - B. entertain readers with a story of recklessness
 - C. inform readers of the dangers of Niagara Falls
 - D. explain to readers that fame can be difficult to attain

II. Read the play below and answer questions 6 to 14.

CHARACTERS:

CLERK
CUSTOMER
ROBOT HOUSEKEEPER
ENTERTAINMENT ROBOT
FIX-IT ROBOT
MEDICAL ROBOT
EXECUTIVE ROBOT
OTHER ROBOTS

ROBOTS FOR SALE

SETTING: *A store where many kinds of robots are for sale.* NOTE: *This may be indicated with chairs and table at front of classroom and signs reading:*

CASH REBATES FOR OLD ROBOTS, ASK ABOUT OUR LIBERAL TRADE-IN POLICY
FOR OLD MODELS, ROBOT SHOWROOM, WE SPECIALIZE IN REHABILITATED
5 ROBOTS, LOWEST PRICES FOR NEW AND USED MODELS—MECHANICAL WONDER
WORKERS, *etc.*

AT CURTAIN RISE: *All ROBOTS, except MEDICAL ROBOT and EXECUTIVE ROBOT, are seated on chairs in a row. CLERK is dusting them.*

10 CLERK: Business certainly has been quiet. In fact, there isn't any business. I haven't sold a single robot all week. (CUSTOMER *enters.*) But wait—here's someone now. (to CUSTOMER) Hello. May I help you?

CUSTOMER: Yes. I want to buy a robot housekeeper.

15 CLERK (*going to* ROBOT HOUSEKEEPER): Step this way, please. Here's our latest and best model. (*Pushes buttons on* ROBOT HOUSEKEEPER's *back.* ROBOT HOUSEKEEPER *stands and pantomimes actions as* CLERK *describes them.*) You can see that this robot does everything—it washes dishes . . . sweeps the floor . . . hangs pictures . . . dusts furniture . . . (ROBOT HOUSEKEEPER *starts to move faster and faster.*) It polishes silverware . . . irons clothes . . . does the washing . . . (ROBOT HOUSEKEEPER *begins to slow up, performing actions in slow motion. Finally, it stops moving. Head and body hang forward with arms hanging almost to floor.*)

20 CUSTOMER: It moved too fast, and now it's exhausted. It didn't last very long, did it?

25 CLERK (*flustered*): Well . . . ah . . . (*gets idea*) That's really part of our demonstration. Our robots are very adaptable and easy to repair. The power pack probably needs recharging. Our Fix-It Robot can take care of that.

"Robots for Sale" by Jane V. Miller is reprinted with the permission of *PLAYS, The Drama Magazine for Young People*, © October 2004 and may only be reproduced with the permission of *PLAYS, The Drama Magazine for Young People*/Sterling Partners, Inc., PO Box 600160, Newton, MA 02460, pp. 139–143.

(Goes to FIX-IT ROBOT, *pushes buttons*. FIX-IT ROBOT *stands and goes to* ROBOT HOUSEKEEPER.) The Fix-It Robot can fix anything and everything: a lawnmower, a car, a jumbo jet, your food processor. It will have the Housekeeping Robot in perfect condition in no time. (*Pushes more buttons on* FIX-IT ROBOT's back. *With large screwdriver*, FIX-IT ROBOT *begins to poke and prod* ROBOT HOUSEKEEPER, *who makes grinding and whirring noises and begins to move arms and legs*.)

CUSTOMER: It's beginning to move again!

35 CLERK: It is amazing, isn't it? (FIX-IT ROBOT *helps* ROBOT HOUSEKEEPER *to feet*. ROBOT HOUSEKEEPER's head is tilted to one side, right arm pointing up, left arm pointing over right shoulder. It stands bent over and walks about jerkily, going backward and forward.)

CUSTOMER: That Robot Housekeeper's still not right. Somehow I don't think

40 your Fix-It Robot fixed it.

CLERK: No, I just think the Robot Housekeeper isn't quite broken in. It needs a couple of weeks to get the bugs out, and then you have to bring it in for a five-hundred mile check-up and oil change. But remember, after all, no one is perfect. (CLERK *helps* ROBOT HOUSEKEEPER *to chair where it sits*.)

45 CUSTOMER: I really don't think it's quite what I'm looking for.

CLERK: Sh-h-h! This robot is very sensitive. We don't want to hurt its feelings.

CUSTOMER (*going to* ENTERTAINMENT ROBOT): What does this robot do?

CLERK (*enthusiastically*): That's the Super-Deluxe Entertainment Robot, our latest model—a complete home entertainment center in a new, beautifully

50 designed robot. Let me demonstrate. (*Pushes buttons on* ENTERTAINMENT ROBOT's back) First, some music. This robot can sing a wide selection of songs. Just name your favourite song. (ENTERTAINMENT ROBOT *gets up, walks to centre*.)

CUSTOMER: Can it sing "Over the Rainbow?"

55 CLERK: Of course. That's easy. (*Pushes buttons*. ENTERTAINMENT ROBOT *spreads arms wide, sings a few bars of "Over the Rainbow" off-key, in scratchy voice*.)

CUSTOMER (*hands over ears*): Stop! Stop! That's terrible.

CLERK: It sounds fine to me—of course, it needs a little tuning. But don't we all? (*pushes button*) Now, how about some dancing? What would you like to see?

60 Tap dance? Ballet? Disco? Or an old-fashioned waltz? You name it—our Entertainment Robot can do it.

CUSTOMER: How about a waltz? (*Waltz music may be played*. ENTERTAINMENT ROBOT *grabs* CUSTOMER *and starts whirling* CUSTOMER *around stage in a waltz with increasing speed*.) Help! Help! Stop this thing! Let me go!

65 (CLERK *runs after them, frantically pushing buttons*. Suddenly, ENTERTAINMENT ROBOT *stands rigid, and* CUSTOMER *falls to floor*.)

CLERK: Are you all right?

70 **CUSTOMER:** I guess so. (*gets to feet, rubs his arm*) No bones broken. (*points to ENTERTAINMENT ROBOT*) I'd like to enter that model in a dance marathon. It would be a sure winner. (*rubs leg*)

CLERK: Do you feel all right? We have a new experimental robot in the back room—a Medical Robot. Shall I get it?

CUSTOMER (*edging away*): Uh . . . no, thanks.

75 **CLERK:** It knows all the latest wonder cures. It can do physical therapy, psychoanalysis, acupuncture, remove warts and bunions, perform major surgery—with or without anesthesia. (*MEDICAL ROBOT enters. It wears white coat and reflector on forehead, has stethoscope hanging around neck, and carries hammer, saw, chisel, etc.*)

80 **CUSTOMER** (*drawing back*): No never mind! I feel fine. (*limping toward exit*) I never felt better in my life! Goodbye. (*exits*)

CLERK: I wonder what's the matter with him? (*dejected*) Another sale lost. I'm afraid I'm never going to be a success in this robot business. (*EXECUTIVE ROBOT enters, carrying briefcase.*)

85 **EXECUTIVE ROBOT** (*in flat, mechanical voice*): I . . . want . . . to . . . talk . . . to . . . you.

CLERK (*looking EXECUTIVE ROBOT over*): I've never seen a robot like this. It must be the very newest model. A VIP executive type with a briefcase.

EXECUTIVE ROBOT: I . . . have . . . a . . . message . . . for . . . you . . . from . . .

90 **Mr. Thing.**

CLERK: Mr. Thing, Mr. Charles C. Thing? The owner of the store? You must be his own important, personal message-carrying robot. Tell me, what's the message?

EXECUTIVE ROBOT: In . . . recognition . . . of . . . your . . . long . . . service . . . to

95 . . . the . . . company. . .

CLERK (*eagerly*): Yes, yes?

EXECUTIVE ROBOT: Effective . . . at . . . once You . . . are . . . fired.

(*EXECUTIVE ROBOT goes to other ROBOTS, and all shake hands. Then all ROBOTS stand and start to pantomime their various jobs as CLERK dejectedly walks to door.*)

100 **CLERK** (*turning*): By the way, may I use your name and model number for a reference?

ROBOTS (*together*): Don't . . . call . . . us We'll . . . call . . . you. (*curtain*)

Jane V. Miller

II. Read the play “Robots for Sale” and answer questions 6 to 14.

6. The Robot Housekeeper stops operating **most likely** because it
- A. runs out of power
 - B. needs a new home
 - C. has completed the required tasks
 - D. is programmed for short demonstrations only
7. In this passage, the word “*flustered*” (line 24) reflects the clerk’s
- A. concern
 - B. annoyance
 - C. impatience
 - D. nervousness
8. The customer probably insists that he is feeling fine (lines 80 to 81) because he
- A. survives the dance with the robot
 - B. has no need for medical attention
 - C. expects the medical robot to be faulty
 - D. does not want to overwhelm the clerk
9. Taken together, the sentences “In . . . recognition . . . of . . . your . . . long . . . service . . . to . . . the . . . company . . .” and “Effective . . . at . . . once You . . . are . . . fired” (lines 94 to 97) are an example of
- A. irony
 - B. sarcasm
 - C. repetition
 - D. symbolism
10. The statements “Don’t . . . call . . . us We’ll . . . call . . . you” (line 103) imply that the
- A. robots will not provide the clerk with a reference
 - B. robots are programmed by humans
 - C. clerk has been temporarily laid off
 - D. clerk has been dismissed

11. The phrases that describe the movements and positions of the characters in the play are called
- A. footnotes
 - B. plot twists
 - C. editorial notes
 - D. stage directions
12. The **main** purpose of this play is to provide the audience with
- A. information through the use of detail
 - B. commentary through the use of humour
 - C. description through the use of examples
 - D. persuasion through the use of arguments
13. From the beginning of the play to the end of the play, the mood of the sales clerk changes from
- A. arrogance to humility
 - B. anxiety to confidence
 - C. thoughtfulness to pessimism
 - D. hopefulness to discouragement
14. This play is an example of a
- A. fable
 - B. satire
 - C. parody
 - D. tragedy

III. Read the poem below and answer questions 15 to 19.

The Sea

This reading selection is unavailable for Internet posting due to copyright limitations. Please refer to the information below regarding the source in which this reading selection can be found.

James Reeves

Reeves, James. "The Sea." In *The New Oxford Treasury of Children's Poems*. By Michael Harrison and Christopher Stuart-Clark. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 96.

III. Read the poem “The Sea” and answer questions 15 to 19.

15. The statement “The sea is a hungry dog” (line 1) is an example of
- A. onomatopoeia
 - B. hyperbole
 - C. metaphor
 - D. simile
16. In the poem, the stones on the beach are compared to
- A. bones
 - B. paws
 - C. teeth
 - D. jaws
17. The words “the grasses on the dune / Play no more their reedy tune” (lines 16 to 17) describe the fact that the
- A. sea is asleep
 - B. dog is at peace
 - C. night storm has passed
 - D. wind has stopped blowing
18. In the poem, the poet **most strongly** emphasizes the element of
- A. scent
 - B. sound
 - C. colour
 - D. texture
19. In likening the sea to a dog, the poet **mainly** suggests that the sea
- A. makes many noises
 - B. has lifelike qualities
 - C. has various emotions
 - D. takes on various forms

IV. Read the excerpt from a novel below and answer questions 20 to 27.

from LYDDIE

This reading selection is unavailable for Internet posting due to copyright limitations. Please refer to the information below regarding the source in which this reading selection can be found.

Katherine Paterson

Paterson, Katherine. *Lyddie*. New York: Puffin Books, 1992, pp. 48–50.

IV. Read the excerpt from the novel *Lyddie* and answer questions 20 to 27.

- 20.** The phrase “so-called gentry” (line 19) implies that
- A.** the passengers are pretending to be rude
 - B.** Lyddie is afraid to argue with the passengers
 - C.** the passengers should be courteous but are not
 - D.** Lyddie knows the passengers well enough to judge them
- 21.** The phrase “obliged to alight” (line 23) means that all the passengers were
- A.** asked to push the carriage
 - B.** required to get out of the carriage
 - C.** forced to start working on the carriage
 - D.** ordered to move around in the carriage
- 22.** Which of the following phrases indicates that the gentlemen failed to free the carriage?
- A.** “to no avail” (lines 25–26)
 - B.** “men grunted and cursed below” (lines 26–27)
 - C.** “a quarter of an hour of watching” (line 29)
 - D.** “were not smiling” (lines 35–36)
- 23.** Lyddie’s assistance in freeing the coach demonstrates that she is
- A.** restless
 - B.** forceful
 - C.** conceited
 - D.** resourceful

24. After the coach is freed, the coachman's attitude toward the gentlemen is one of
- A. gratitude
 - B. frustration
 - C. indignation
 - D. amusement
25. The term "irate inmates" (line 47) **best** suggests that the passengers were feeling
- A. anxious to be resuming their journey
 - B. annoyed with the coachman's actions
 - C. confused about what Lyddie was doing
 - D. jealous that Lyddie was travelling with the coachman
26. Lyddie's words in lines 53 to 55 **best** suggest that she is feeling
- A. irritated
 - B. relieved
 - C. confused
 - D. disappointed
27. By the end of the excerpt, the coachman's attitude toward Lyddie was one of
- A. annoyance
 - B. admiration
 - C. indifference
 - D. compassion

V. Read the article below and answer questions 28 to 34.

Life on his homestead is almost perfect for 83-year-old Herb Erickson.

AN ALMOST PERFECT LIFE

The bear is tasty, I'm told, because it was shot yesterday and because it's been fattening up on grain and berries in readiness for hibernation.

Accompanied by a wonderful russet-brown bannock Herb Erickson baked that morning from his own recipe, and followed by wild strawberries and cream, it's a
5 completely satisfying meal for a city boy more used to rigatoni¹ with artichokes in a tomato cream sauce followed by tiramisu² and cappuccino.³

The satisfaction has something to do with the company too, an 83-year-old trapper, archery champion, poet, trick roper and all-around livewire who's taught his cat to jump through his arms on command.

10 Erickson didn't shoot the bear. He hasn't hunted or trapped for years. The meat came from one of the many friends the gregarious⁴ man with the quick laugh has made in a lifetime on the same homestead his parents staked out in the wild lakes country southeast of Lac La Biche.

He hasn't written any poetry for quite some time either.

15 "It just sort of comes to me. It has to be triggered by something. I can't just sit down and write a poem," he says with a shrug and a smile that lights up his blue eyes.

But he'll recite all 11 of them to anyone who cares to listen. They're about familiar things in his life—geese, chickadees, forest fires, flowers, his old dog
20 Blackie and his mother. The poem he wrote for her 90th birthday in 1974 reads in part:

Some years were happy, some sad, some good, and some bad. But she endured and weathered them all. For you see her here today in this hall. She is sitting so gracious and serene in her chair. You wouldn't believe she is ninety.

25 He still shoots arrows though, every day. When it gets too cold to use his outside targets, the man who was Canadian archery champion every year from 1949 to 1957 sits in one corner of his house and fires shaft after shaft the four metres to a target in the other corner made from cardboard and old clothes.

He credits the weight training that pulling a bowstring provides with keeping
30 him fit and healthy. And he's not shy about stripping off his shirt and flexing his impressive muscles for someone he's only known a few minutes.

He shoots . . . by instinct and very fast. You don't really aim, you have a feel

¹rigatoni—large, ribbed macaroni

²tiramisu—an Italian dessert

³cappuccino—espresso coffee topped with steamed milk

⁴gregarious—sociable, outgoing

for where it's supposed to go. The arrow's gone within three seconds and three seconds later another one is streaking to its target.

35 He learned the technique as the seventh of 10 children of a couple who moved up here from the U.S. in 1914, by train to the end of the line at Vegreville and then by wagon to a quarter section near Pinehurst Lake.

A Cree friend gave him his first bow made from dried willow when he was eight and it's been his passion ever since. In his first tournament he astounded
40 Alberta's best archers by beating them with a simple wooden bow made from yew;⁵ no glove, sight or armguard; and homemade wooden arrows. He even took a bow overseas with him during the Second World War, but had to leave it in England. . . . He was wounded in the hip and spent three days as a prisoner of the Germans before they were overrun by the Allies and he was
45 rescued.

That bow is one of his proudest possessions and it's one of the first things he shows the visitor to a home that's perfect for a man of the outdoors who never married.

There's a gas stove and sink on one wall, a fridge by the door and a single
50 bunk against another wall. In the middle is an old wooden table that's both a place to eat and a workplace for his arrow and bowstring making. He has a furnace but prefers the wood-burning stove. No TV or radio and the only sound apart from his storytelling is the hourly twittering from the bird clock that hangs on the wall between old photographs, wildlife scenes from calendars going back
55 as far as the '30s, and an Elizabeth Taylor *Star Weekly* cover from 1949.

One of the few concessions to modernity in his life is the new Ford Explorer outside.

"I found myself shovelling snow last winter and I don't want to do that at my age so I got something to get me through it."

60 The gleaming sport utility vehicle does look a bit odd, because this is a place of memories.

Right next to the 48-year-old house he lives in now is the old homestead his blacksmith father built. The tamarack logs are as solid now as when they were felled.

65 A few yards away is his garden where the rhubarb plant his parents brought with them from the U.S. in 1914 still flourishes.

"If they had it 15 years before they came, and that's entirely possible, then this plant is 100 years old."

There too is the trappers' cabin he hauled out to nearby Lake Horne every fall,
70 and where he spent the long winters skinning squirrels, beaver, muskrats and anything else that could generate a few dollars.

He loved the freedom and exhilaration he felt in the bush and apart from two summers working on the Mackenzie River boats in the '30s, it was his only livelihood from the age of 16.

⁵yew—a type of evergreen tree

75 He figures he's trapped 30,000 squirrels (he got 1,941 one year alone) and
walked around the world in snowshoes.
 Many days, he walked 24 kilometres through the heavy snow.
 He's had his share of encounters with bears—he scared off a grizzly that came
to his front door—but never felt his life was in danger.

80 He was an expert marksman and always had a rifle handy. He had that
hand/eye/distance gift that allowed him to excel at archery, roping, shooting and
throwing axes.
 He can hit a small target with an axe from 4, 8 and 11 metres (the optimum
distances for the number of rotations of the axe) and the first time he threw two
85 axes at once, both of them hit the target.
 To amuse visitors he'll throw a dishcloth over his shoulder without looking
and make it land perfectly on the rail above the sink on the other side of the room.
 He once lassoed a great horned owl, and he'll lasso your outstretched arm
from across the room and then throw a series of half hitches on it.

90 He can't do his party piece rope trick any more, where he jumps inside a loop
and plays the harmonica with his free hand.
 He injured his knee doing it at a picnic and had to have surgery.
 He rolls up his pantleg and shows the 30-centimetre scar where metal pins
were inserted.

95 "See. Don't I heal good? But I'll tell you, a year from now, I don't think I'll
be able to walk."

 His fingers are still nimble enough that he'll amaze you with close-up card
manipulation, and there's a trick he does with two hats and four balls that'll have
you swearing he makes the balls pass through the wooden tabletop.

100 He doesn't compete in archery any more but still gets together regularly with
fellow archers.
 He recently received a lifetime achievement award at the provincial
championships in Taber.
 "I got along good with people and made a lot of friends through archery. It's a
105 wonderful sport."

 His life, he says, has been wonderful all round.
 "It's been about as close to perfect as you could get."
 Not that it's anywhere near over.
 With his excellent health, and his mother living to 100, chances are there'll be
110 many more lunches of roast bear and bannock.

Dave Finlayson

V. Read the article “An Almost Perfect Life” and answer questions 28 to 34.

- 28.** As used in line 8, the phrase “all-around livewire” refers to Erickson’s
- A.** innovative manner
 - B.** types of occupations
 - C.** energetic personality
 - D.** variety of accomplishments
- 29.** Erickson attributes his good health to
- A.** the work required to pull a bowstring
 - B.** a diet of wild meat and garden-fresh vegetables
 - C.** a life without the comforts of the modern world
 - D.** the determination needed to live on a homestead
- 30.** Erickson’s victory at his first archery tournament was remarkable because he
- A.** shot by instinct
 - B.** was the youngest participant
 - C.** had been injured during the war
 - D.** competed with limited equipment
- 31.** In the article, contrast between old and new is **best** shown by the
- A.** bannock and the rigatoni
 - B.** vehicle and Erickson’s home
 - C.** gas stove and the wood-burning stove
 - D.** house Erickson lives in and the homestead
- 32.** Which of the following activities does Herb Erickson continue to do?
- A.** Trapping
 - B.** Writing poetry
 - C.** Performing tricks
 - D.** Competing in archery

33. Erickson would **most likely** describe his life on the homestead as
- A. lonely
 - B. amusing
 - C. satisfying
 - D. dangerous
34. In this article, the author tells the reader about Erickson's life **mainly** through the use of
- A. opinion
 - B. dialogue
 - C. persuasion
 - D. description

VI. Read the poem below and answer questions 35 to 37.

Cockpit in the Clouds

This reading selection is unavailable for Internet posting due to copyright limitations. Please refer to the information below regarding the source in which this reading selection can be found.

Dick Dorrance

¹el trains—trains that are elevated or raised above the ground

Dorrance, Dick. "Cockpit in the Clouds." In *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children*. Selected and introduced by Jack Prelutsky. New York: Random House, 1983, p. 9.

VI. Read the poem “Cockpit in the Clouds ” and answer questions 35 to 37.

- 35.** The word “tiny” (line 8) is used to describe the size of the
- A.** wing
 - B.** plane
 - C.** crowds
 - D.** buildings
- 36.** The use of italics for the last line of the poem reinforces the
- A.** noise of the plane’s engines
 - B.** difference in speed of travel
 - C.** speaker’s feeling of insignificance
 - D.** distance between the city and the plane
- 37.** The point of view expressed in this poem would **most likely** be that of a
- A.** pilot
 - B.** motorist
 - C.** pedestrian
 - D.** flight attendant

VII. Read the essay below and answer questions 38 to 42.

IN PRAISE OF BIKES

IMAGINE . . . NO AUTOMOBILES. Imagine you are at a meeting of city council. Picture a fast-talking promoter in a fluorescent green sports coat addressing the council, saying: “GOOD PEOPLE OF RIVER CITY, HAVE I GOT A VEEHICLE FOR YOU! IT WEIGHS TWO TONS, TAKES UP THE SPACE OF A GUEST ROOM. IT RUSTS, BREAKS
5 DOWN, GUZZLES FOSSIL FUELS . . . , LIKES TO RUN INTO BUILDINGS, BRIDGE ABUTMENTS, TELEPHONE POLES, PEDESTRIANS AND OTHERS OF ITS OWN KIND . . . COSTS ANYWHERE FROM FIVE TO THIRTY-FIVE GRAND NEW . . . AND ISN’T WORTH DIDDLEY SQUAT ON A TRADE IN! OH YEAH . . . AND IT’LL COST YA SEVERAL HUNDRED INSURANCE BUCKS A YEAR JUST TO SIT IN THE DRIVER’S SEAT. I CALL IT
10 THE CAR! WHADDYJA SAY, GOOD PEOPLE?”

You would have the bozo committed, no? And yet that’s a pretty fair description of the automobile. That’s the trouble with cars — we’re so used to them we have trouble seeing how absurd they’ve become — at least as a means of getting around in our cities.

15 Not so with the bicycle. As a serious alternative form of urban transportation, the bike is a relative newcomer. Which means it’s okay to badmouth it. Chic, even.

The rap is that they’re dangerous. That the riders take over the sidewalks, don’t signal turns, don’t stop on the red and generally flout the law in a most
20 un-Canadian manner. The complaints come, primarily, from downtown car drivers who would dearly love to flout a law or two — but can’t. Because they’re gridlocked. Fused into a miles-long, inner-city daisy chain of chrome, steel and PVC, in what some anonymous . . . wag¹ was pleased to dub “the rush hour.”

25 And while they sit there, the drivers, fuming, white-knuckled, ulcers ticking . . . here comes this two-wheeling popinjay,² flitting like a butterfly through a buffalo wallow! He is riding a vehicle you can hoist with one hand, that never needs a gas pump, pollutes no air, never boils over or goes rrrrRRRRRAaaa . . . rrrRRRRRAaaa . . . with a price tag lower than the
30 replacement cost of that right front fender where the rust is beginning to show through.

And that’s bad enough. But what really hurts is the knowledge that the guy on the bike is going to get home . . . first! Leaving the car drivers behind . . . in the traffic . . . shaking fists . . . honking, perhaps.

35 Funny sound, a car honking. Honk! Honk!

Makes you wonder what the death rattle of the dinosaur sounded like.

Arthur Black

¹wag—a humorous person

²popinjay—a vain, talkative person

VII. Read the essay “In Praise of Bikes” and answer questions 38 to 42.

- 38.** The author included the promoter’s talk in the introduction in order to encourage readers to
- A. accept the automobile
 - B. debate the use of advertising
 - C. understand environmental issues
 - D. question a widely held perspective
- 39.** Capital letters are probably used in the first paragraph to convey the
- A. confidence of the author
 - B. importance of the author
 - C. intensity of the promoter
 - D. frustration of the promoter
- 40.** In this passage, the word “flout” (line 21) means
- A. accept
 - B. violate
 - C. change
 - D. improve
- 41.** Which of the following phrases contains a simile?
- A. “the bike is a relative newcomer” (line 16)
 - B. “Fused into a miles-long, inner-city daisy chain of chrome” (line 22)
 - C. “here comes this two-wheeling popinjay, flitting like a butterfly” (line 26)
 - D. “riding a vehicle you can hoist with one hand” (line 27)
- 42.** The tone of the essay is
- A. humorous
 - B. thoughtful
 - C. whimsical
 - D. complimentary

VIII. Read the excerpt from a short story below and answer questions 43 to 47.

from TO BUILD A FIRE

Day had broken cold and gray, exceedingly cold and gray, when the man turned aside from the main Yukon trail and climbed the high earth-bank, where a dim and little-travelled trail led eastward through the fat spruce timberland. It was a steep bank, and he paused for breath at the top, excusing the act to himself by looking at
5 his watch. It was nine o'clock. There was no sun nor hint of sun, though there was not a cloud in the sky. It was a clear day, and yet there seemed an intangible pall over the face of things, a subtle gloom that made the day dark, and that was due to the absence of sun. This fact did not worry the man. He was used to the lack of sun. It had been days since he had seen the sun, and he knew that a few more days
10 must pass before that cheerful orb, due south, would just peep above the sky-line and dip immediately from view.

The man flung a look back along the way he had come. The Yukon lay a mile wide and hidden under three feet of ice. On top of this ice were as many feet of snow. It was all pure white, rolling in gentle, undulations where the ice-jams of the
15 freeze-up had formed. North and south, as far as his eye could see, it was unbroken white, save for a dark hair-line that curved and twisted from around the spruce-covered island to the south, and that curved and twisted away into the north, where it disappeared behind another spruce-covered island. This dark hair-line was the trail — the main trail — that led south five hundred miles to the Chilcoot Pass,
20 Dyea, and salt water; and that led north seventy miles to Dawson, and still on to the north a thousand miles to Nulato, and finally to St. Michael on Bering Sea, a thousand miles and half a thousand more.

But all this — the mysterious, far-reaching hair-line trail, the absence of sun from the sky, the tremendous cold, and the strangeness and weirdness of it all —
25 made no impression on the man. It was not because he was long used to it. He was a newcomer in the land, a *chechaquo*, and this was his first winter. The trouble with him was that he was without imagination. He was quick and alert in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances. Fifty degrees below zero meant eighty-odd degrees of frost. Such fact impressed him as being cold and
30 uncomfortable, and that was all. It did not lead him to meditate upon his frailty as a creature of temperature, and upon man's frailty in general, able only to live within certain narrow limits of heat and cold; and from there on it did not lead him to the conjectural field of immortality and man's place in the universe. Fifty degrees below zero stood for a bite of frost that hurt and that must be guarded against by the
35 use of mittens, ear-flaps, warm moccasins, and thick socks. Fifty degrees below zero was to him just precisely fifty degrees below zero. That there should be anything more to it than that was a thought that never entered his head.

London, Jack. "To Build a Fire." In *Lost Face*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910, pp. 63–66. Public domain.

As he turned to go on, he spat speculatively. There was a sharp, explosive crackle that startled him. He spat again. And again, in the air, before it could fall to
40 the snow, the spittle crackled. He knew that at fifty below spittle crackled on the snow, but this spittle had crackled in the air. Undoubtedly it was colder than fifty below — how much colder he did not know. But the temperature did not matter. He was bound for the old claim on the left fork of Henderson Creek, where the boys were already. They had come over across the divide from the Indian Creek country,
45 while he had come the roundabout way to take a look at the possibilities of getting out logs in the spring from the islands in the Yukon. He would be in to camp by six o'clock; . . . the boys would be there, a fire would be going, and a hot supper would be ready.

Jack London

VIII. Read the excerpt from the short story “To Build a Fire” and answer questions 43 to 47.

43. The main purpose of the first paragraph is to
- A. establish the setting
 - B. introduce a character
 - C. create a sense of adventure
 - D. establish the author’s theme
44. Which of the following words is closest in meaning to the word “undulations” (line 14)?
- A. Channels
 - B. Hollows
 - C. Curves
 - D. Waves
45. The sentence “He was quick and alert in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances” (lines 27 to 28) suggests the man’s
- A. faith in his expertise
 - B. ability to make thoughtful decisions
 - C. slowness to feel at home in this region
 - D. inability to understand the importance of situations
46. In this excerpt, the writing technique that the author uses **most often** is the development of
- A. point of view
 - B. sensory details
 - C. internal conflicts
 - D. character motivation
47. The man in the excerpt continued on his journey **most likely** because he
- A. did not have to return to camp
 - B. did not wish to cross the divide
 - C. had planned to meet his friends
 - D. was used to travelling under these conditions

IX. Read the poem below and answer questions 48 to 51.

THE PAPER-BOY

In the first morning light
the paper-boy threw
the news of the world
Against closed doors.
5 The early light accompanied him
Like a silent, obedient dog
But he did not see it, he was
working
Distributing world.
10 Only after the last bundle
Made up of the waste of yesterday
was thrown away with a
practised but indifferent hand,
Did he become aware of his loyal
15 companion.
Whistling, the boy rode his cycle
home.
The morning ran alongside,
A golden, barking dog.

Walter Bauer
Translated by *Henry Beissel*

Bauer, Walter. "The Paper-Boy." Translated by Henry Beissel. In *Working Together: Anthology*. MultiSource. Edited by Margaret Iveson and Samuel Robinson. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1993, p. 99.

IX. Read the poem “The Paper-Boy” and answer questions 48 to 51.

- 48.** The phrase “Against closed doors” (line 4) establishes an atmosphere of
- A.** relief
 - B.** solitude
 - C.** acceptance
 - D.** resignation
- 49.** The boy approached his task with
- A.** deep affection
 - B.** a sense of pride
 - C.** total concentration
 - D.** a sense of obligation
- 50.** In this poem, the light is a symbol of
- A.** happiness
 - B.** obedience
 - C.** responsibility
 - D.** companionship
- 51.** The two figures of speech used in lines 18 and 19 are
- A.** imagery and simile
 - B.** metaphor and alliteration
 - C.** personification and metaphor
 - D.** personification and alliteration

X. Examine the cartoon below and answer questions 52 to 55.

CALVIN AND HOBBS



Bill Watterson

CALVIN AND HOBBS © 1986 Watterson. Dist. By UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.

X. Examine the cartoon “Calvin and Hobbes” and answer questions 52 to 55.

- 52.** In frame 2, the octopus’s expression and the text suggests
- A.** cruel intent
 - B.** clever humour
 - C.** morbid curiosity
 - D.** suppressed anger
- 53.** In context, the phrase “SLEEPY WATERFRONT COMMUNITY” (frame 2) portrays the people who live there as
- A.** cooperative
 - B.** prosperous
 - C.** idealistic
 - D.** innocent
- 54.** The sentence “A MUFFLED SCREAM LINGERS IN THE SALTY AIR!” (frame 3) establishes
- A.** irony
 - B.** mood
 - C.** setting
 - D.** character
- 55.** In frame 4, Calvin’s mother views him as
- A.** impulsive
 - B.** distracting
 - C.** destructive
 - D.** irresponsible

Part B: Reading—2006 Test Blueprint and Item Descriptions

The following blueprint shows the reporting categories and language functions by which questions were classified on the 2006 Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test.

Question Distribution by Reporting Category	Question Distribution by Language Function		Number and Proportion of Questions
	Informational	Narrative / Poetic	
Identifying and Interpreting Ideas and Details Students recognize explicit or implicit ideas and details, and make inferences about the relationships between ideas and details.	1 2 29 30 32 38	6 22 8 23 10 25 16 35 17 45 19 53	18 Questions (33% of Part B: Reading Total)
Interpreting Text Organization Students identify and analyze the author's use of genre. Students identify and analyze the author's choice of form, organizational structure, style, literary techniques, text features, and conventions.	39 42	9 46 11 51 14 52 15 37 43	11 Questions (20% of Part B: Reading Total)
Associating Meaning Students use contextual clues to determine the connotative meaning of words, phrases, and figurative language.	28 40 41	7 44 20 54 21 55 36	10 Questions (18% of Part B: Reading Total)
Synthesizing Ideas Students make generalizations by integrating information from an entire selection in order to identify the purpose, theme, main idea, or mood of the selection.	3 33 4 34 5 31	12 27 13 47 18 48 24 49 26 50	16 Questions (29% of Part B: Reading Total)
Number and Proportion of Questions	17 Questions (31% of Part B: Reading Total)	38 Questions (69% of Part B: Reading Total)	Part B: Reading Total 55 Questions (100%)

The table below provides information about each question: the keyed response, the difficulty of the item (the percentage of students who answered the question correctly), the reporting category, the language function, and the item description.

Question	Key	Diff. %	Reporting Category	Language Function	Item Description
1	A	93.5	Ideas and Details	Informational	Identify a character's motivation for undertaking the action described in an informational article.
2	A	68.7	Ideas and Details	Informational	Identify the state of mind of a character suggested by a particular word in an informational article.
3	C	66.1	Synthesizing Ideas	Informational	Identify the reason a character failed to achieve a main goal as described in an informational article.
4	A	72.6	Synthesizing Ideas	Informational	Draw a conclusion about the quality of a character's life based on details in an informational article.
5	D	77.6	Synthesizing Ideas	Informational	Identify the main purpose of an informational article.
6	A	81.0	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Use key details in a play to infer the reason a character responds in a specific manner.
7	D	76.0	Associating Meaning	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize the meaning of a word from its context in a play.
8	C	93.7	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Use key details in a play to infer the reason a character has developed a specific attitude.
9	A	72.1	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize the use of irony in a play.
10	A	58.3	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Draw a conclusion about a character's actions in a play.
11	D	73.2	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize the use of stage directions in a play.
12	B	65.1	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Identify the writer's main purpose for writing a play.
13	D	83.2	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Identify the change of mood of a specified character in a play.
14	B	38.5	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize the use of satire in a play.
15	C	81.3	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize the use of metaphor in a poem.
16	A	77.7	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Identify two key details that are compared with one another in a poem.
17	D	49.9	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Identify what is implied by the use of particular phrases in a poem.
18	B	84.3	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Identify the sense most strongly evoked by imagery in a poem.
19	B	57.7	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Identify the idea suggested by the poet in a comparison in a poem.

Question	Key	Diff. %	Reporting Category	Language Function	Item Description
20	C	88.7	Associating Meaning	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize the connotative meaning of a phrase from context in an excerpt from a novel.
21	B	57.1	Associating Meaning	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize the meaning of a phrase from context in an excerpt from a novel.
22	A	69.9	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Identify the phrase that has a particular meaning in an excerpt from a novel.
23	D	67.5	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize an attribute of a character's personality based on key details in an excerpt from a novel.
24	D	81.6	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Draw a conclusion about a character's attitude based on details in an excerpt from a novel.
25	B	54.3	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Identify the state of mind of specified characters suggested by a phrase in an excerpt from a novel.
26	A	70.1	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Infer a character's feelings from details in an excerpt from a novel.
27	B	69.8	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Draw a conclusion about a character's attitude by synthesizing information in an excerpt from a novel.
28	C	68.3	Associating Meaning	Informational	Recognize the connotative meaning of a phrase from context in an informational article.
29	A	66.9	Ideas and Details	Informational	Locate a key idea about a character's state in an informational article.
30	D	70.9	Ideas and Details	Informational	Locate a key detail from an informational article.
31	B	59.8	Synthesizing Ideas	Informational	Identify details in an informational article that best show contrast between two given states.
32	C	54.7	Ideas and Details	Informational	Identify a detail about a character's life as described in an informational article.
33	C	78.2	Synthesizing Ideas	Informational	Identify the adjective that a character in an informational article might use to describe his life.
34	D	78.9	Synthesizing Ideas	Informational	Identify the writing technique mainly used by the writer of an informational article.
35	B	62.2	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize the object referred to by the use of a particular word in a poem.
36	C	63.0	Associating Meaning	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize the effect intended by the use of italics in a poem.
37	A	80.8	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Draw a conclusion about the point of view expressed in a poem.
38	D	62.9	Ideas and Details	Informational	Identify the writer's reason for including a character's speech in the introduction of an essay.
39	C	76.2	Text Organization	Informational	Recognize the use of capital letters to convey meaning in an essay.

Question	Key	Diff. %	Reporting Category	Language Function	Item Description
40	B	76.3	Associating Meaning	Informational	Recognize the contextual meaning of a word in an essay.
41	C	86.4	Associating Meaning	Informational	Recognize an example of a simile in an essay.
42	A	46.0	Text Organization	Informational	Identify the tone of an essay.
43	A	76.6	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Identify the purpose of a paragraph in an excerpt from a short story.
44	D	38.3	Associating Meaning	Narrative / Poetic	Identify the meaning of a word from context in an excerpt from a short story.
45	D	63.0	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Interpret a statement to make an inference about a character in an excerpt from a short story.
46	B	48.5	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize the writing technique used most often by the writer in an excerpt from a short story.
47	C	61.1	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Synthesize information to make an inference about a character in an excerpt from a short story.
48	B	74.0	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize the atmosphere established by a phrase in a poem.
49	C	51.1	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Identify the motivation behind the actions of a character in a poem.
50	D	56.3	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Identify the meaning of a symbol in a poem.
51	C	68.3	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize the use of figures of speech in a poem.
52	A	71.6	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Infer the meaning of an illustration and text as used in a cartoon.
53	D	79.1	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Infer the meaning of a phrase from key details in a cartoon.
54	B	63.4	Associating Meaning	Narrative / Poetic	Identify from a phrase the mood evoked in a frame of a cartoon.
55	B	87.0	Associating Meaning	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize from an illustration a trait of a character in a cartoon.